

JA



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
 United States Patent and Trademark Office
 Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
 P.O. Box 1450
 Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
 www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/676,966	10/01/2003	Jean-Yves Lehman	Serie 5802	8122
7590 01/31/2005 Linda K. Russell Air Liquide Suite 2200 2700 Post Oak Blvd. Houston, TX 77056			EXAMINER WALBERG, TERESA J	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3742	
DATE MAILED: 01/31/2005				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/676,966	Applicant(s) LEHMAN, JEAN-YVES	
	Examiner Teresa J. Walberg	Art Unit 3742	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 23-25 and 29-31 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 23-25 and 29-31 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 26-28 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 01 October 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the air separation apparatus, the at least one column, the means for sending a liquid, the means for removing vaporized liquid, the two columns (claim 28), and the column being a double column (claim 30) must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 23-25 and 29-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Briglia (2003/0140654) and Belaieff (2,376,749).

Briglia discloses an air separation apparatus and method (see paragraph 0004) including at least one column (para. 4, line 4) or a double column (para. 0010, line 4), at least one heat exchanger (para. 4, lines 14-15) including at least two stacked dividing plates with a roughly uniform thickness, at least one passage between the plates, at least one fin in the passage, the fins being aluminum (para. 0004, line 14), means for sending a liquid to a heat exchanger, and means for removing vaporized liquid from a heat exchanger. Briglia teaches the use of an oxygen purity of about 99% (para. 0038), which meets the claim limitation of more than 60 mol. percent. Briglia also teaches that resistance of fin and plate heat exchangers to the pressures used for air separation is a known problem in the art (para. 0004).

Briglia does not disclose the relative thicknesses of the fin and dividing plates.

Belaieff discloses a plate type heat exchanger which uses thicker than usual fins to provide greater resistance to high pressure including at least one stacked dividing plate (6) with a roughly uniform thickness, at least one passage

Art Unit: 3742

between said plates(s), at least one flat rectangular fin (9) in the passage, and the ratio of the minimum thickness (0.005 in.) of each fin (9) to the thickness (0.003 in.) of each said dividing plate (6) being greater than about 0.8 or 1.0 or 1.5. ($0.005 / 0.003 = 1.667$).

It would have been obvious in view of Belaieff to use greater fin thicknesses so as to have a ratio of fin thickness to plate thickness of greater than 0.8 or 1.0 or 1.5 in the heat exchanger of Briglia, the motivation being to make the heat exchanger more resistant to being damaged by high pressure.

4. Claims 26-28 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

5. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 23-25 and 29-31 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

In view of the missing text in paragraph 4 of the prior office action, the present office action is non-final.

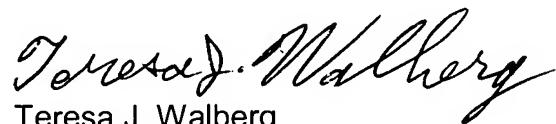
6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Lehman (6,745,828) is cited to show heat exchanger used in an air separation apparatus.

Art Unit: 3742

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Teresa J. Walberg whose telephone number is 571-272-4790. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9:00 - 5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robin Evans can be reached on 571-272-4777. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Teresa J. Walberg
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3742

tjw